

## Exhibit D.2.4



**Metro** | *Making a great place*

May 2, 2016

Multnomah County  
Planning Commission  
c/o 1600 SE 190th Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97233

### **RE: METRO COMMENTS - Draft Comprehensive Plan Updates**

Dear Planning Commission:

Metro appreciates the opportunity to participate in this process. For those Planning Commission members who are not familiar with Metro's role in Multnomah County, and specifically as a parks service provider, I will briefly introduce Metro. Following the introduction, Metro presents its comments and concerns, as well as proposed revisions to the County's April 2016 Draft Comprehensive Plan.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Metro is a regional government agency serving Multnomah County residents and the greater Portland area. Metro, as a parks service provider, and as an owner and operator of open space generally, has its roots in Multnomah County and the County's park system. Metro first became a parks agency in 1990 when the St. John's Landfill was closed and the 1,900 acre Smith and Bybee Wildlife Refuge was established, with Metro as the steward.

In 1995, Multnomah County transferred ownership, responsibility and staff for its parks, cemeteries and boating and recreation facilities to Metro. Metro is now the de facto parks' service provider for county residents, owning and managing approximately 8,500 acres in Multnomah County.

With the passage of two regional bond measures in 1995 and 2006, Metro began a natural areas acquisition program that vastly expanded publicly owned natural lands in Multnomah County. The operations levy, passed by regional voters in 2013, made it possible for Metro to begin restoring and promoting the health of local ecosystems, and to provide access for county residents of all ages and abilities to learn and enjoy them. As the greater Portland area grows and becomes more diverse, the County, Metro and partners see a shared opportunity to make parks and nature relevant to the communities they serve.

Metro owns, operates and manages well-loved parks and open spaces, including Oxbow and Blue Lake Regional parks, Sauvie Island's Howell Territorial Park, and Glendoveer Golf

Course and Fitness Trail. Additional Metro facilities such as the Sauvie Island Boat Ramp, Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp, Broughton Beach and Chinook Marine Facility provide close-in access to the Columbia River for County residents. Numerous natural areas throughout the county provide more passive recreational opportunities, in addition to providing important water quality and wildlife habitat benefits. Metro's facilities provide a diverse range of outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences, including boating, hiking, bicycling, bird watching, and general scenic and recreational access.

A component of the recreational system serving County residents is the regional trail network; providing jogging, hiking, and bicycle paths in and through the County. The regional trails program connects Multnomah County destinations, open spaces, and jurisdictions. Metro plays the role of convener, technical expert and steward of the region's vision, and often secures the rights to build missing sections of the regional trail network. Metro has been instrumental in facilitating development of the Springwater Corridor and the 40-Mile Loop regional trail system located in Multnomah County.

Today, Metro's Parks and Nature mission is to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and create opportunities to enjoy nature close to home through a connected system of parks, trails, and natural areas.

## **PROPOSED DRAFT PLAN REVISIONS:**

Following are proposed revisions to the April 2016 Draft Comprehensive Plan respectfully requested by Metro.

This document focuses solely on the Introduction and Citizen Involvement (Chapter 1); Natural Areas (Chapter 5); Parks and Recreation (Chapter 8); and the Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Rural Area Plan (Exhibit B/Appendix C) provisions.

Revisions are shown with strikethrough/underline text to denote ~~deleted~~ and new text. The recommendations are intended to clarify Metro's role as a service provider; improve and clarify policy language; correct mapping omissions; eliminate conflicts between other County policies; and remove inappropriate references to Metro documents. For each revision, Metro offers an explanation for the requested amendment.

### **#1: Chapter 1 - Introduction and Citizen Involvement:**

#### **At page 26: Discussing the characteristics of the West Hills**

**"Public lands:** Metro owns over 1,000 acres near the northern end of Forest Park ~~to ensure wildlife connectivity. Metro is actively restoring this former timber land to a diverse native habitat to protect water quality, promote fish and wildlife habitat, and create opportunities for county residents to enjoy nature.~~ These Metro properties are part of a large and extensive network of protected natural and recreational areas in the West Hills that extend into the city of Portland's jurisdiction, including Forest Park Conservancy's Ancient Forest

Preserve, over 5000 acres in Portland's Forest Park and the Audubon Society of Portland's 150-acre Nature Sanctuary, Washington Park, and the Hoyt Arboretum. The Bureau of Land Management owns land north of Cornelius Pass Road used for forestry and recreation. Nearby Burlington Bottoms is part of this network of public land, providing high value breeding ponds for amphibians that migrate to and from our upland forests."

**Explanation:** Metro requests the phrase "ensure wildlife connectivity" be deleted and replaced with an accurate statement of why Metro holds over 1,000 acres north of Forest Park. The land is not held specifically and only to ensure wildlife connectivity as represented in the draft. Rather, the land is held to promote Metro's park and nature department mission that has three elements: "to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and create opportunities to enjoy nature close to home through a connected system of parks, trails, and natural areas." The proposed amendments accurately state the existing condition of the land and the reasons why Metro owns it.

Additionally, the public lands located in the Tualatin Mountains include a large and extensive network of interconnected trails, providing access to nature for all County residents. As drafted, there is no mention of the recreational element and the role that public lands play in providing parks and recreational opportunities to county citizens. Metro is of the opinion that, particularly in a "Parks and Recreation" chapter, this community service should be recognized and affirmed by the County. As such, Metro requests including "and recreational" areas in describing the West Hills.

## **#2 Chapter 5 – Natural Resources:**

### **At page 23: Fish and Wildlife Habitat**

"5.26 Protect significant native fish and wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors and specifically limit conflicting uses within ~~natural ecosystems~~ and sensitive big game winter habitat areas."

**Explanation:** Metro does not understand what the phrase "within natural ecosystems" in the context of limiting conflicting uses within natural ecosystems means. It seems to be a very, very broad term and could present real problems for both the County and landowners in trying to implement it.

## **#3 Chapter 8 – Parks and Recreation:**

### **At page 3: Discussing agencies/recreational service providers**

**"Metro. Metro is a regional government agency serving Multnomah County residents and the greater Portland area. Metro, as a parks service provider, and as an owner and**

operator of open space generally, has its roots in Multnomah County and the County's park system. Metro first became a parks agency in 1990 when the St. John's Landfill was closed and the 1,900 acre Smith and Bybee Wildlife Refuge was established, with Metro as the steward.

In 1995, Metro regional government assumed ownership and operation of a number of park and recreational facilities previously owned and operated by the County, including Oxbow Regional Park, Blue Lake Regional Park, Glendoveer Golf Course and Fitness Trail, Howell Territorial Park, Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp, Broughton Beach, Chinook Marine Facility, historic cemeteries, and a number of boat ramps and other facilities. Metro also owns and manages operates the Howell Territorial Park on Sauvie Island, as well as a number of natural areas and nature preserves in Multnomah County managed primarily for ecological values to protect water quality, promote fish and wildlife habitat, and provide citizen access to nature.

A component of the recreational system serving County residents is the regional trail network; providing jogging, hiking, and bicycle paths in and through the County. The regional trails program connects Multnomah County destinations, open spaces, and jurisdictions. Metro plays the role of convener, technical expert and steward of the region's vision, and often secures the rights to build missing sections of the regional trail network. Metro has been instrumental in facilitating development of the Springwater Corridor and the 40-Mile Loop regional trail system located in Multnomah County.

With the passage of two regional bond measures in 1995 and 2006, Metro began a natural areas acquisition program that vastly expanded publicly owned natural lands in Multnomah County. The operations levy, passed by regional voters in 2013, made it possible for Metro to begin restoring and promoting the health of local ecosystems, and to provide access for county residents of all ages and abilities to learn and enjoy them.

Metro's facilities provide a diverse range of outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences, including boating, hiking, bicycling, bird watching, and general scenic and recreational access.

Today, Metro's Parks and Nature mission is to protect water quality, promote fish and wildlife habitat, and create opportunities to enjoy nature close to home through a connected system of parks, trails, and natural areas."

**Explanation:** This section is intended to introduce the public agencies that provide parks and recreation services to Multnomah County residents. Respectfully, the description provided in the draft document did not adequately describe Metro, its history with Multnomah County, and the degree to which it is park service provider for County residents. Metro is of the opinion that it is important to accurately reflect Metro's role, its park and recreational assets in the County, and its management objectives. The draft language did not do so.



As such, Metro proposes language that provides some historical perspective of Metro's role as a park service provider, expands upon the list of identified park facilities, and accurately reflects the agency and its public mission.

**#4 At page 4: Discussing Sandy River recreational facilities**

"Several public and private camps are located adjacent to the river."

**Explanation:** The draft language did not identify public camps along the Sandy River as being an important park and recreational element. Metro operates a campground at Oxbow Regional Park, along the Sandy River, thus the addition of "public" above.

**#5 At page 4 and 5: Figures 1 and 2**

**Explanation:** At pages 4 and 5 are figures 1 and 2. The figures are intended to depict parks and recreational areas in Multnomah County. The maps do not accurately depict Metro holdings which provide park and recreational services to county residents. There are numerous properties, including large land holdings, not represented in the maps. Metro has contacted the County's consultant and planning staff concerning the omissions. Metro believes the data set employed was not the most current available.

Additionally, the map figures attempt to distinguish between "park" and "open space" by providing different color coding. Metro is of the opinion the attempt to distinguish between the two – if in fact there is any difference – is not necessary, is very difficult and as currently done, it includes errors. For instance, Forest Park is identified as open space, when it is in fact a formalized park. Metro believe that assigning one color code to both "park/open space" would be a more efficient and accurate representation.

**#6 At page 6: Discussion planning documents**

"Metro has a variety of **Parks and Open Space planning documents**, including policies associated with ~~land acquisition~~, natural resource protection and management, recreational planning, and individual facility master plans. The agency's parks and nature system, including overarching values, operating procedures, facility descriptions and key strategies, is outlined in the Metro Parks and Nature System Plan (2016).

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/parks-and-nature-investments/system-plan>"

**Explanation:** Metro assumes that the reference to "land acquisition" document is to our inner agency acquisition refinement plans. Those refinement documents are

not “parks and open space planning documents” as represented above. Rather, those documents were created in association with our two bond measures and act solely to aid the agency in identifying purchase target areas. As such, Metro requests the reference to land acquisition documents as a parks and open space planning document be removed as it is inappropriate.

#### **#7 At page 8: Goals, Policies, and Strategies**

**“Goal:** To help meet the recreational needs of Multnomah County ~~rural~~ residents and visitors to its rural areas through support of, and coordination with local, regional, state, and federal agencies that manage recreation facilities and sites within the County.”

**Explanation:** Metro is uncertain why the County’s Comprehensive Plan, and specifically the Goal of the Parks and Recreation chapter, is described as only intended to meet the recreational needs of the county’s *rural* residents. Metro understands Multnomah County and its Comprehensive Plan to represent and govern all County residents, and not just rural residents.

Limiting the Goal of the County’s recreational policies to rural residents also conflicts with other elements of the draft Comprehensive Plan, and specifically the Chapter 1 Equity goals and policies. There, the intent of the plan is “to incorporate and embody the County’s commitment to racial/ethnic equity and empowerment.” Its Goal is: “To support access to all people and to ensure that planning policies and programs are inclusive.”

#### **#8 At page 8: Parks and Recreation Planning**

“8.1 Support efforts of the Intertwine Alliance, Metro, and other organizations in establishing a coordinated approach to create and maintain a strong, interconnected regional network of parks, trails, and natural areas.”

**Explanation:** Metro respectfully asks that its role in creating, owning, developing, managing, and supporting the interconnected regional networks of parks, trails, and natural areas be specifically reflected in the Comprehensive Plan. Simply, that is Metro’s Parks and Nature department. That is what we do as a regional agency and parks service provider and have aspired to do since 1992.

“8.2 Encourage the development of recreation opportunities by public agencies and private entities ~~consistent~~ compatible with wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor protection.”

**Explanation:** Metro is of the opinion that “consistent” is not an appropriate word/connecting element in the policy statement. “Consistent” means happening in the same way. Recreation opportunities cannot “happen in the same way” as

wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor protection. Using the adjective “consistent” in the draft policy will create implementation problems which can be avoided by using the correct adjective in its place. Rather, Metro believes it is more appropriate (and we believe it to be the intent of the drafters) that recreational opportunities be “compatible” with wildlife habitat. “Compatible” is an understandable and common adjective to describe a planning goal.

## **#9 At page 9: West Hills Policies and Strategies**

“8.8 Support only those recreational activities within the West Hills area that are ~~complementary to, and~~ do not cause undue negative impacts on; natural and environmental resources that are identified in Goal 5 ~~and in the Metro Greenspaces Master Plan and lands approved in Metro’s Acquisition Refinement Plan.~~”

**Explanation:** The first amendment request is similar to the issue in section 8.2 above. The adjective “complementary” is not the correct word to use here. Including it may create implementation problems which can be avoided. “Complementary” means completes or enhances the qualities of. When talking about recreational activities, they are generally not held up to a standard of enhancing a natural resource. Rather, they are uses, just like a home or other development, that are generally restricted from inappropriately impacting natural resources. Using “complementary” as proposed may cause recreational uses and their passive nature, to be judged more strictly than other forms of development. The limitation “do not cause undue negative impacts” by itself is more than adequate to address the concerns of recreational activities and their potential impacts on natural resources.

The second issues relates to including Metro Greenspaces Master Plan (1992) and Metro’s Acquisition Refinement Plans (1995 and 2006) as standard and criterion references. These documents are inappropriate references. The 1992 Greenspaces Master Plan was a regional document created and adopted by multiple jurisdictions to develop a high level vision for the regional natural areas, trails, and parks – a vision of an interconnected system. The Master Plan was never intended to and does not prescribe standards related to specific uses at specific sites. For Metro, the Master Plan program has evolved and is more accurately represented in the 2016 Metro Parks and Nature System Plan.

Like the 1992 Master Plan, the acquisition refinement plans are not land use planning documents. They do not include any standards and criteria. Rather, they are two internal documents that were and are used to focus Metro’s purchases by identifying target areas and target properties that help Metro’s Parks and Nature department meet its mission.

The Goal 5 process is the process by which the County identifies natural resources. It is the controlling process and no other document or standards needs to be or

should be referenced. However, if any Metro document is referenced, the only document should be the 2016 Metro Parks and Nature System Plan.

#### **#10 At page 9: Sauvie Island and Multnomah Channel Policies and Strategies**

“8.9 Continue to coordinate with Metro to ensure compliance with Rural Reserve designations, implementation of Metro’s ~~Greenspaces Master Plan~~ 2016 System Plan, and planning for Howell Park. In particular, work with Metro to:

1. Ensure activities will ~~complement~~ be compatible with natural and environmental resources of local and regional significance; and
2. Ensure that Howell Territorial Park uses and improvements are ~~maintain harmony~~ compatible with the rural character of the plan area as well as natural and cultural resources.”

**Explanation:** The edits here are intended to promote consistency: to make the language in the West Hills policies and strategies above, which seek the same policy objectives, consistent with the Sauvie Island policies and strategies.

The first edit is the same concern expressed above and seeks to delete the inappropriate reference to the 1992 Greenspaces Master Plan.

Also, as stated above, Metro does not believe “complement” is the correct or appropriate adjective to use here. As written, one would have to demonstrate that an activity made a natural or environmental resource complete, and I am not sure how one would do that. Also “maintain harmony” is not a professional term that we see in the land use regulatory field. Metro believes “compatibility” is more appropriate and would result in consistency in the comp plan’s policies.

“8.10 Support only those recreational activities within the SIMC area that are ~~complementary to and do not negatively impact~~ do not cause undue negative impacts on natural and environmental resources on Sauvie Island and along the Multnomah Channel and its tributaries that are identified in Goal 5 ~~and in the Metro Greenspaces Master Plan and lands approved in Metro’s Acquisition Refinement Plan.~~”

**Explanation:** The edits here are intended to promote consistency: to make the language in the West Hills policies and strategies above, which seek the same policy objectives, consistent with the Sauvie Island policies and strategies.

Metro’s concern with the word “complementary” is the same as stated above.

Also, a “do not negatively impact” standard may be an impossibly high threshold to meet, as anything could be characterized as a negative impact. Such a standard would regulate recreational uses at Howell Territorial Park more stringently than

any other use permitted or proposed on the Island! If the goal is to prevent unwanted impacts, Metro is of the opinion that the language proposed in the West Hills policies above – “do not cause undue negative impacts” – is more appropriate and commonly understood regulatory phrase.

The second issue relates to including Metro Greenspaces Master Plan (1992) and Metro’s Acquisition Refinement Plans (1995 and 2006) as standard and criterion references. These documents are inappropriate references. The 1992 Greenspaces Master Plan was a regional document created and adopted by multiple jurisdictions to develop a high level vision for the regional natural areas, trails, and parks – a vision of an interconnected system. The Master Plan was never intended to and does not prescribe standards related to specific uses at specific sites. For Metro, the Master Plan program has evolved and is more accurately represented in the 2016 Metro Parks and Nature System Plan.

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The Goal 5 process is the process by which the County identifies natural resources. It is the controlling process and no other document or standard needs to be or should be referenced. However, if any Metro document is referenced, the only document should be the 2016 Metro Parks and Nature System Plan.

## **Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Rural Area Plan (Exhibit B/Appendix C):**

### **#11 At page 31: Figure 3.4**

**Explanation:** The figure does not represent all of Metro’s public lands on the island.

### **#12 At page 33: Large Scale Significant Resource Sites:**

“Howell Lake and Virginia Lakes: These two sites are found to be significant as open space, fish and wildlife habitat, natural areas, water areas, wetlands, and groundwater resources. Howell Lake is located on Metro’s Howell Territorial Park. ~~the Bybee-Howell County Park (now owned by Metro).~~

#### **At page 33: Historical and Cultural Sites**

Bybee-Howell House: This Greek revival styled home was constructed in 1856, and is the oldest structure in rural Multnomah County. It is part of Metro’s Howell Territorial Park ~~the Bybee-Howell County Park (now administered by Metro).~~

**At page 35: Howell Lake**

Most of the wetland areas are part of Metro's Howell Territorial Park ~~the Bybee-Howell Park~~, administered by METRO. METRO is currently preparing a master plan for the park.

**Explanation:** These amendments seek to correct the Park's name.

**#13 At page 44: Figure 3.19**

**At page 50: Figure 4.1**

**Explanation:** The figures do not represent all of Metro's public lands on the island.

**#14 At page 52: Howell Territorial Park**

Metro manages this 120 acre park which is located on the west side of Sauvie Island. The park includes the Bybee-Howell House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. This Greek revival structure was built in 1856. The park also includes picnic facilities, a pioneer orchard, Howell Lake and associated wetlands. The restored farmhouse is closed to the public and no public tours are available at this time.

~~Metro's plans are to use of t~~The farm house, agricultural fields, and park are used to support educational programs as an educational facility highlighting Native American culture and early Oregon events, farming practices, and wildlife study and viewing. The site is zoned entirely EFU with a WRG overlay. Future development of the site for park ~~and educational~~ uses is managed through the conditional use process, where on- and off-site impacts are considered.

**Explanation:** The above edits more accurately reflect the historical and current uses of Howell Territorial Park. The park was obtained from Multnomah County pursuant to an Intergovernmental Agreement and has been operated accordingly since then. Metro does not understand why the uses are referred to in the future in the second paragraph, versus actually occurring today.

**#15 At page 56: Policy 4.2**

"Continue to coordinate with Metro to ensure compliance with Rural Reserve designations, implementation of Metro's Greenspaces Master Plan 2016 System Plan, and planning for Howell Park. In particular, work with Metro to:



1. Ensure activities will ~~complement~~ be compatible with natural and environmental resources of local and regional significance; and
2. Ensure that Howell Territorial Park uses and improvements are ~~maintain harmony~~ compatible with the rural character of the plan area as well as natural and cultural resources.”

**Explanation:** The edits here are intended to promote consistency: to make the language in the West Hills policies and strategies above, which seek the same policy objectives, consistent with the Sauvie Island policies and strategies.

The first edit is the same concern expressed above and seeks to delete the inappropriate reference to the 1992 Greenspaces Master Plan.

Also, as stated above, Metro does not believe “complement” is the correct or appropriate adjective to use here. As written, one would have to demonstrate that an activity made a natural or environmental resource complete, and I am not sure how one would do that. Also “maintain harmony” is not a professional term that we see in the land use regulatory field. Metro believes “compatibility” is more appropriate and would result in consistency in the comp plan’s policies.

#### **#16 At page 56, Policy 4.3**

“Support only those recreational activities within the rural plan area that are ~~complementary to and do not negatively impact~~ do not cause undue negative impacts on natural and environmental resources on Sauvie Island and along the Multnomah Channel and its tributaries that are identified in Goal 5 ~~and in the Metro Greenspaces Master Plan and lands approved in Metro’s Acquisition Refinement Plan.~~”

**Explanation:** The edits here are intended to promote consistency: to make the language in the West Hills policies and strategies above, which seek the same policy objectives, consistent with the Sauvie Island policies and strategies.

Metro’s concern with the word “complementary” is the same as stated above.

Also, a “do not negatively impact” standard may be an impossibly high threshold to meet, as anything could be characterized as a negative impact. Such a standard would regulate recreational uses at Howell Territorial Park more stringently than any other use permitted or proposed on the Island! If the goal is to prevent unwanted impacts, Metro is of the opinion that the language proposed in the West Hills policies above – “do not cause undue negative impacts” – is more appropriate and commonly understood regulatory phrase.

The second issue relates to including Metro Greenspaces Master Plan (1992) and Metro's Acquisition Refinement Plans (1995 and 2006) as standard and criterion references. These documents are inappropriate references. The 1992 Greenspaces Master Plan was a regional document created and adopted by multiple jurisdictions to develop a high level vision for the regional natural areas, trails, and parks – a vision of an interconnected system. The Master Plan was never intended to and does not prescribe standards related to specific uses at specific sites. For Metro, the Master Plan program has evolved and is more accurately represented in the 2016 Metro Parks and Nature System Plan.

Like the 1992 Master Plan, the acquisition refinement plans are not land use planning documents. They do not include any standards and criteria. Rather, they are two internal documents that were and are used to focus Metro's purchases by identifying target areas and target properties that help Metro's Parks and Nature department meet its mission.

The Goal 5 process is the process by which the County identifies natural resources. It is the controlling process and no other document or standards needs to be or should be referenced. However, if any Metro document is referenced, the only document should be the 2016 Metro Parks and Nature System Plan.

Metro thanks you for the opportunity to address these matters and looks forward to our continued partnership.

Respectfully,



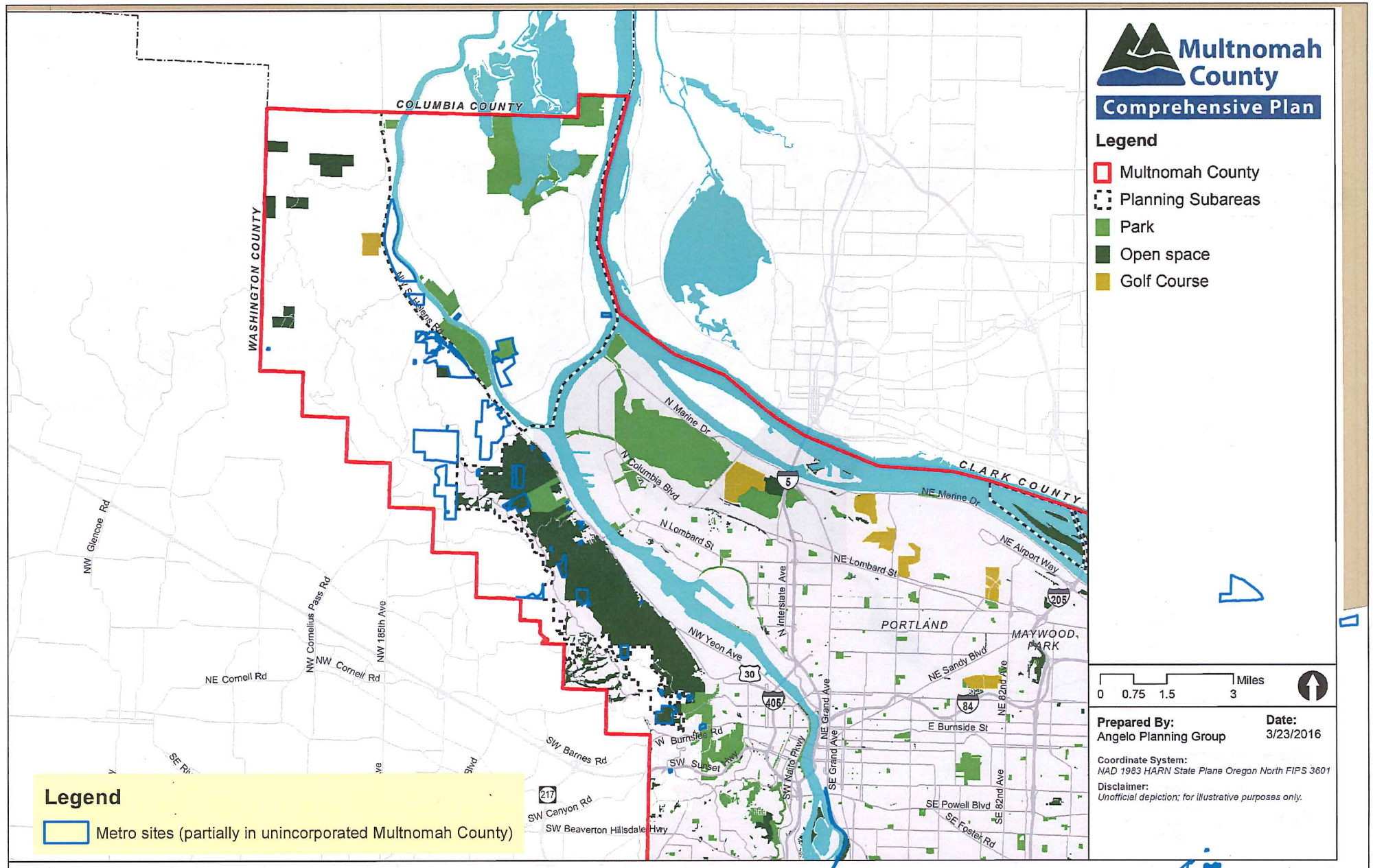
Kathleen Brennan-Hunter  
Director of Parks and Nature

Enclosures

Metro Open/Space holdings – revised Chapter 8, figures 1 and 2  
Habitat Restoration – Sauvie Island photographic example  
Metro Parks and Nature System Plan (2016)  
Parks & Nature Executive Summary of Plan

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/parks-and-nature-investments/system-plan>

NOTE: DOUBLE SIDED





# Multnomah County

## Comprehensive Plan

### Legend

- Multnomah County
- Planning Subareas
- Park
- Open space
- Golf Course

0 1 2 4 Miles



**Prepared By:**  
Angelo Planning Group

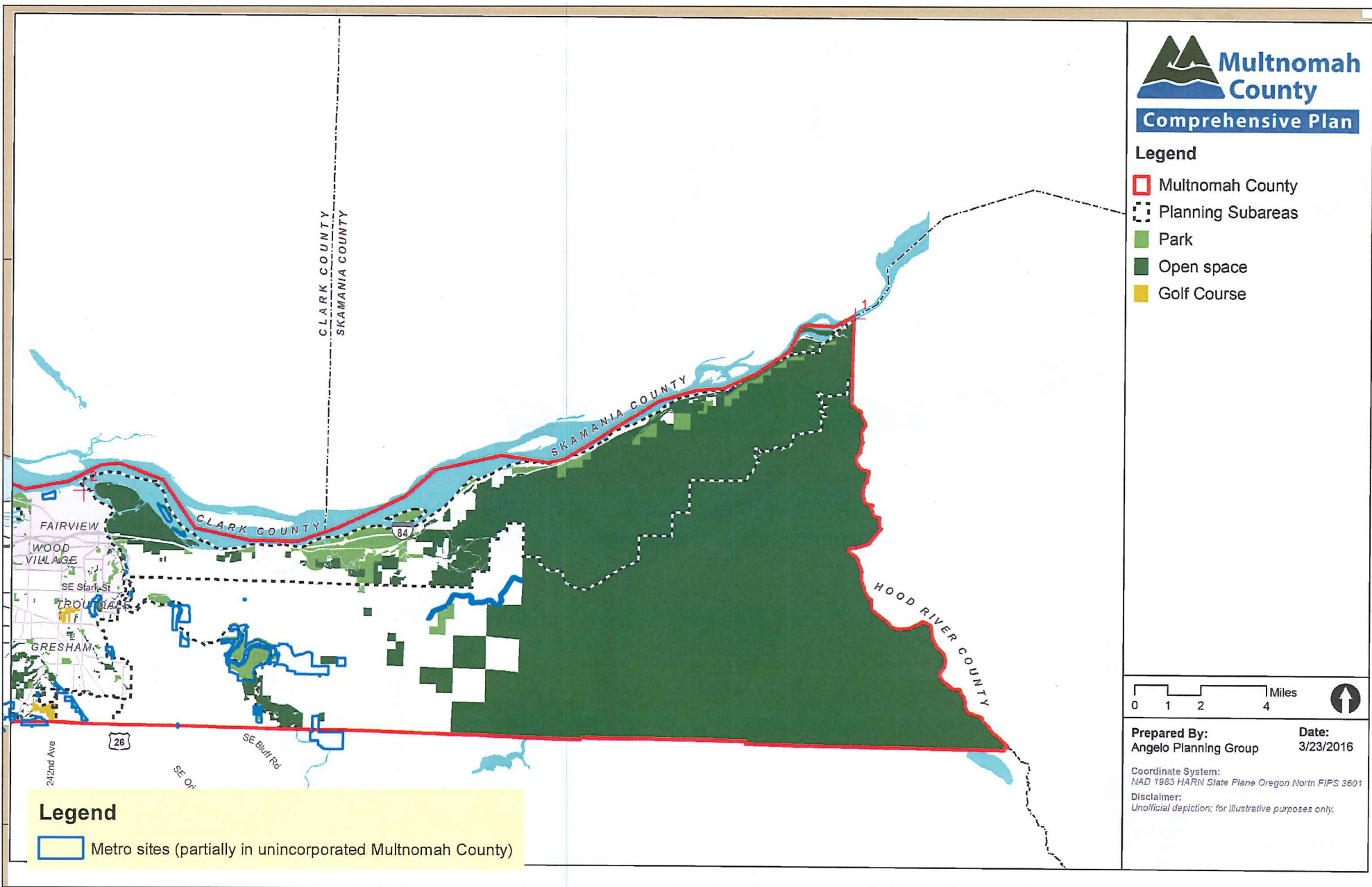
**Date:**  
3/23/2016

**Coordinate System:**  
NAD 1983 HARN State Plane Oregon North FIPS 3601

**Disclaimer:**  
Unofficial depiction; for illustrative purposes only.

### Legend

- Metro sites (partially in unincorporated Multnomah County)





This roughly 15 acre prairie borders the large Howell Pond and lies due north and east of the two Sauvie Island Organic farm fields.

**Three years ago the savanna was 100% covered by weeds, including non-native cover, grasses and thistles.**



Metro began treating the weeds in 2013 and had to keep the field fallow through 3 growing seasons to deplete the weed seedbank and complete preparation for restoring a native prairie there.

Here is the savanna last fall just after harrowing the field to level molehills and prep for seeding:





Last fall Metro was finally able to sow native seed, including the endangered golden paintbrush.  
THE SAVANNA LOOKS TOTALLY DIFFERENT TODAY!



Most of the current high cover is represented by annual wildflowers like rosy Plectritis and blue eyed Mary (Collinsia). Several other annuals (e.g., Collomia, Clarkia) have only just begun to bud and will bloom later.





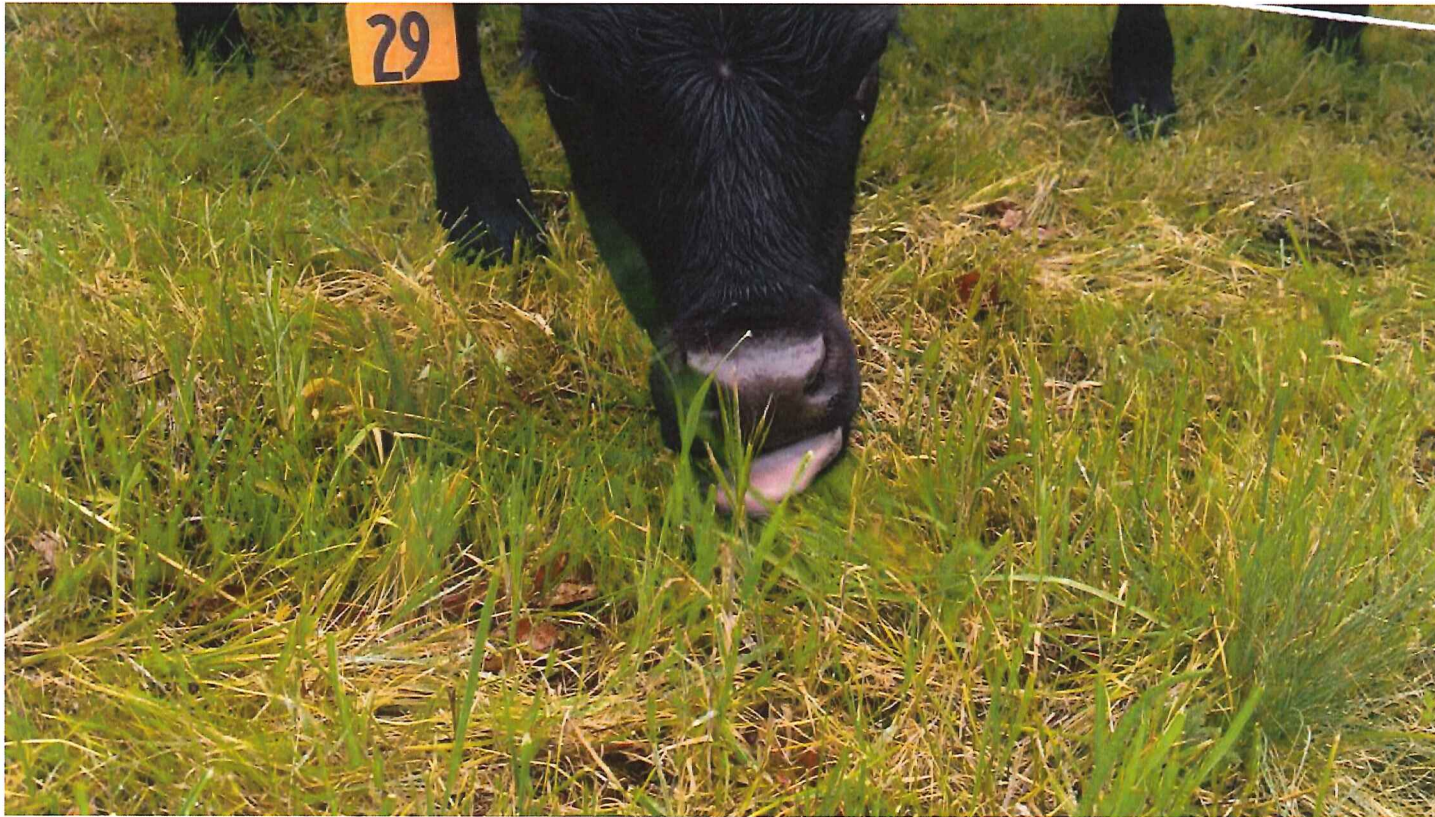
Also showing up in many areas, and even blooming in its first year is the endangered golden paintbrush (center of photo, it's a bit blurry):



Visible below all of the annuals are the grasses and perennials, like meadow checkermallow, Lupines, yarrow, etc. Those will fill in over the next year or two.



You may know we're grazing the prairies at Cooper Mountain again this year:



That is the long term vision for the Howell savanna; cows grazing or haying to help maintain the prairie.



# PARKS & NATURE SYSTEM PLAN

WINTER 2016



Metro

## Nature makes this place feel like home

No matter where you stand in the greater Portland area, nature is never far. With 17,000 acres, Metro manages parks and natural areas across every community in the region – from Chehalem Ridge in the west to the Sandy River Gorge in the east, from Blue Lake and Broughton Beach in the north to Graham Oaks in the south.

This portfolio of land represents both a big opportunity and a big responsibility. Voters have trusted Metro to wisely spend the money they've invested through two regional bond measures and a levy – more than \$400 million – to protect and care for these special places, while also creating opportunities for people to enjoy them.

In 2015, Metro celebrated its 25th year as a parks provider. This milestone comes at a time of tremendous growth, with new destinations, programs and partnerships taking root. A strong plan is needed to guide future decision-making and investments, building a world-class Parks and Nature system that will serve the region's residents for another quarter century and beyond.

Metro's flourishing network of parks, trails, natural areas, nature programs and cemeteries supports the agency's broader mission: making a great place. As Metro invests in livable communities, connections with nature are as critical as homes, jobs and transportation. A successful Parks and Nature system protects water quality and vanishing wildlife habitat. It increases housing values and attracts employers to the region, providing welcome access to the great outdoors for people who live in urban and suburban neighborhoods.

Perhaps most importantly, Oregonians' sense of place is rooted in the forests, rivers and meadows that Metro protects. Nature makes this place feel like home.

The Parks and Nature System Plan lays out Metro's mission and role, the state of the portfolio today, trends that will shape this work and a slate of strategies to guide the future. By providing clarity on Metro's direction, the plan is intended to support Metro's partners and strengthen relationships – complementing the broader regional

network of parks, trails and natural areas. This plan also provides a framework for future decisions about the funding needed to sustain Metro's portfolio of parks, trails, natural areas, nature programs and cemeteries.

Metro's vision will succeed only if it benefits diverse communities across our region. Too often, parks and nature investments have focused on people who are already engaged and already have access to the outdoors. Woven throughout the Parks and Nature System Plan, Metro makes commitments to doing a better job serving people of color and low-income communities. Making a difference will take resources, planning, collaboration, careful listening – and time.

The Parks and Nature System Plan will play out on the ground in many tangible ways, from prioritizing restoration efforts to helping shape the look and feel of future destinations. Ultimately it elevates Metro's stunning landscapes, popular destinations and fun programs to more than individual successes, tying them together as part of a world-class Parks and Nature system.



Read the full Parks and Nature System Plan  
online at [oregonmetro.gov/nature](http://oregonmetro.gov/nature)



# MISSION

## Metro's Parks and Nature mission

"It is our assertion that if we are to have parks and open space areas in the future, we need to reposition our planning and funding priorities now to reflect the importance of greenspaces in our urban fabric. The protection, acquisition and active stewardship of greenspaces must become just as important as planning highways, transit, water and sewer lines, and other basic services."

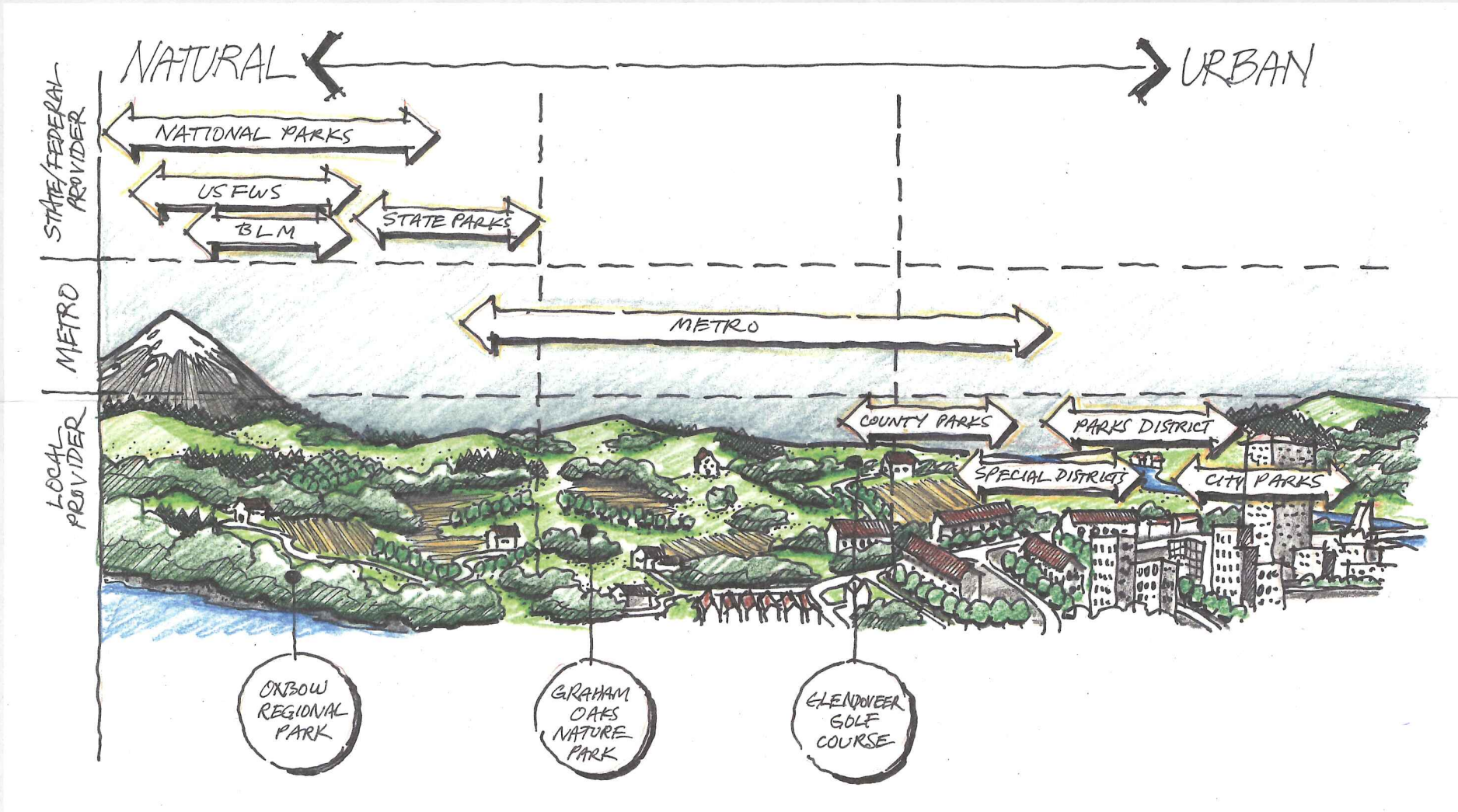
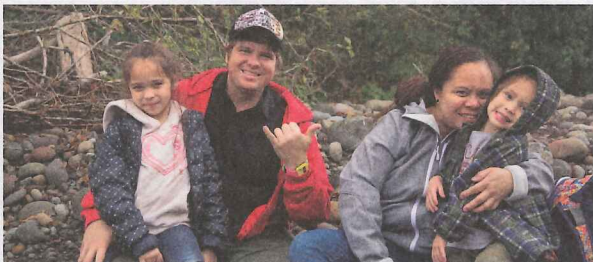
METROPOLITAN GREENSPACES  
MASTER PLAN, 1992

This call to action in the 1992 Greenspaces Master Plan helped spur remarkable investment in the greater Portland region's parks and natural areas over the last two decades. It also started Metro's transformation into one of the largest land managers in the region. Metro's mission as a provider of parks and natural areas has been shaped by two bond measures, the 2013 local option levy and regional planning efforts such as

the Regional Conservation Strategy for the greater Portland area.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Metro Parks and Nature protects water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and creates opportunities to enjoy nature close to home through a connected system of parks, trails and natural areas.



## Metro's role in the region

More than 20 years of policy, voter investment and community support have established Metro as a provider of parks, trails and natural areas. The system plan clarifies Metro's role, particularly its niche relative to other park providers. Metro's work is built on partnerships with local governments, which are strongest when parks systems complement – rather than compete with – one another.

When you arrive at a Metro destination, you'll have a front-row view of some of the most spectacular habitat in the greater Portland area. Across its portfolio Metro leads science-based restoration, provides nature education and volunteer programs, invests in community nature projects

and plays a key role in convening local, regional, state and federal partners to plan and develop parks, natural areas and regional trails.

It is just as important to be clear about what Metro doesn't provide. In general, Metro does not operate local and neighborhood parks, sports complexes, indoor or developed swimming facilities, or indoor recreation centers.

The greater Portland region has a strong network of local park providers and an excellent system of protected state and federal land. However, Metro is one of just a few agencies focusing on large-scale conservation of natural areas close to home in an urban setting. Metro can acquire and

provide access to large sites that typically are beyond the reach of local jurisdictions, but closer to population centers than those managed by state and federal providers. Metro's resources also provide unique support to regional partners through grants and partnerships.

While growing in its role as a major park provider, Metro remains a committed leader in advancing regional initiatives to protect, restore and connect people with nature. Metro will continue to take a collaborative approach, working with The Intertwine Alliance, local park providers, community-based organizations and other partners.



Read the full Parks and Nature System Plan  
online at [oregonmetro.gov/nature](https://oregonmetro.gov/nature)



# NATUREHOODS

## Metro's Parks and Nature portfolio: a collection of 'naturehoods'

In the greater Portland region, nature creates a backdrop for family photographs, weekend walks, computer screensavers, tourist guidebooks and national news coverage – in other words, it's a big part of who we are. Metro's Parks and Nature properties reflect the region's unique natural environment, from the ancient forest at Oxbow Regional Park to the languid flow of the Tualatin River beside a future boat launch, from wetlands in North Portland to towering oak trees along the curves of the Willamette Narrows in West Linn.

To organize its Parks and Nature portfolio, Metro has defined 11 "naturehoods" named for their unique geographic and ecological identities. For example, in the Tonquin Naturehood, large boulders and scoured ponds tell the tale of historic floods that ripped through the area – and set the backdrop for today's Graham Oaks Nature Park and Ice Age Tonquin Trail. In the Clackamas River Naturehood, the namesake gives life to nearby Christmas tree farms, as well as native turtles, salmon and other wildlife. Each naturehood provides a new way of thinking about where you live, just as meaningful as your neighborhood or the Pacific Northwest.

Within each naturehood, Metro manages a variety of properties along the spectrum from popular destinations to sensitive habitat where humans rarely set foot. However, up to this point, Metro has not established definitive criteria for classifying its inventory. The way sites were named has evolved over time, starting with the transfer of Multnomah County properties such as Blue Lake Regional Park, Chinook Landing Marine Park and Howell Territorial Park. Through the 1995 and 2006 bond measures, properties acquired for habitat protection typically were assigned as natural areas with a few key sites selected for development as nature parks.

After 25 years of exponential growth, Metro's Parks and Nature portfolio needs a classification system to help focus planning, development and management. The new system outlined in the system plan describes the primary characteristics and values of each type of place, from regional recreation areas to habitat preserves. Using this system as a guide, Metro can ensure consistency across the region when planning for natural resource protection, park development, amenities and programming.

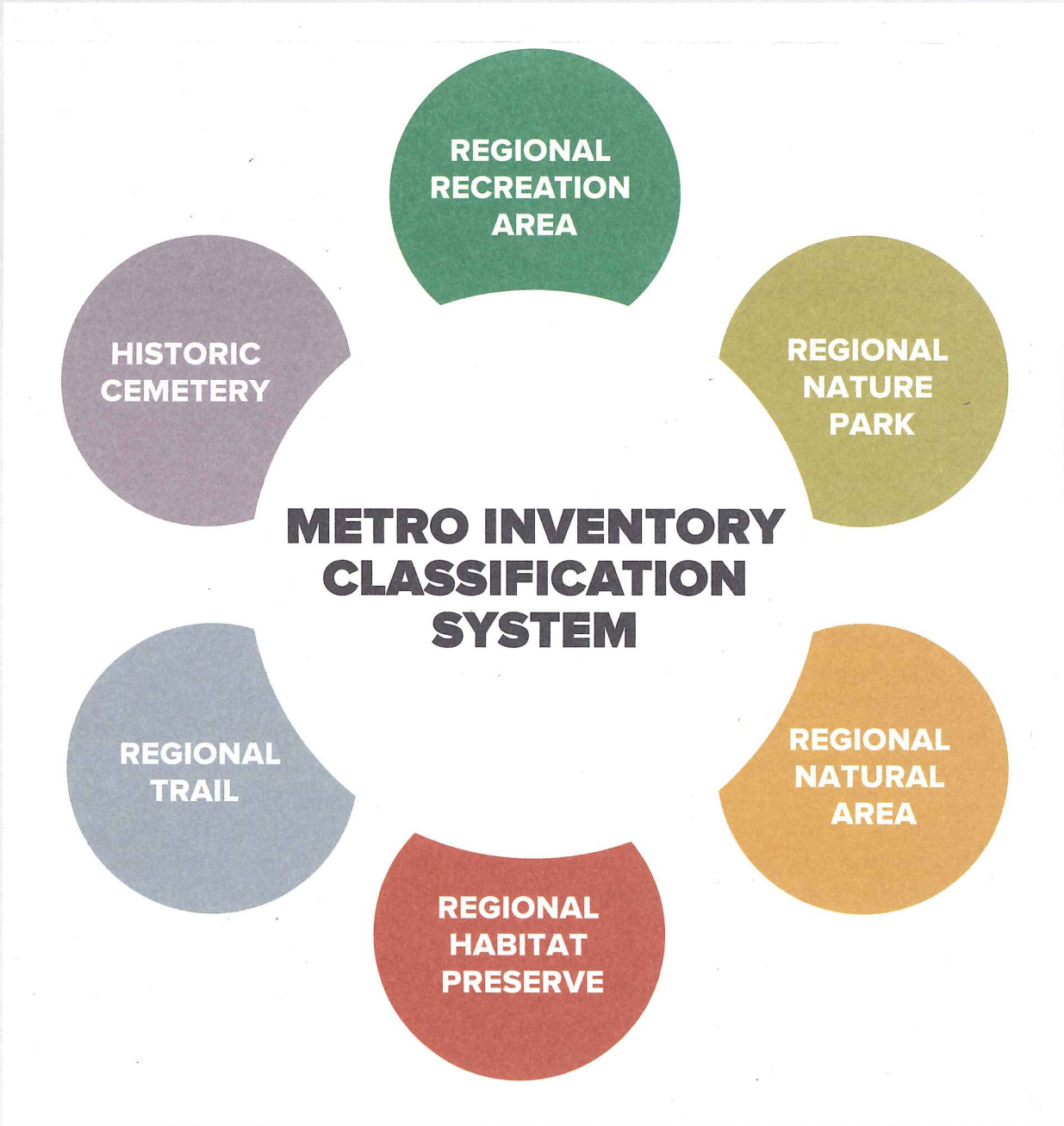


**FIND YOUR NATUREHOOD**

Read the full system plan to discover – or rediscover – voter-protected land in your part of the greater Portland region.

- Clackamas River
- Columbia River and Willamette Lowlands
- Dairy, McKay and Rock creeks

- East Buttes and Johnson Creek
- Greater Willamette Narrows
- Lower-Tualatin
- Mid-Tualatin
- Sandy River
- Tonquin
- Tualatin Mountains
- Upper-Tualatin





# TAKING ACTION

## Putting the system plan on the ground

As the greater Portland region continues to grow, Metro’s Parks and Nature Department will play a critical role in protecting the natural environment and serving the people who treasure it.

The system plan outlines strategies that provide a roadmap for improving on successful places and programs, developing new and innovative approaches, and strengthening relationships with partners. Each strategy lays out not only what Metro Parks and Nature will do, but also how. What does success look like? And what are the most important actions to get started?

Six mission-critical strategies come first, because they are the highest priorities for advancing Met-

ro’s Parks and Nature work on behalf of the region. Some mission-critical strategies are threaded through many program areas, while others describe distinct efforts. The common thread: Each mission-critical strategy is deeply embedded in Metro’s Parks and Nature mission. These strategies deserve extra resources and scrutiny.

### MISSION-CRITICAL STRATEGIES

- Use science to guide Metro’s Parks and Nature portfolio.
- Ensure that Metro Parks and Nature programs and facilities support the needs of underserved communities, including communities of color, low-income communities and young people.
- Develop a stable, long-term funding source to support Metro’s Parks and Nature portfolio.

- Ensure that parks, trails, natural areas and cemeteries managed by Metro are knit together into an integrated system.
- Diversify the businesses and people who do contracted work for Metro Parks and Nature.
- Build, sustain and leverage partnerships to advance the region’s shared commitment to an interconnected system of parks, trails and natural areas.

**The remaining strategies – which represent a large, important body of work – are organized by five broad categories that guide Metro’s portfolio going forward.**

- Protect and Conserve Nature
- Create and Maintain Great Places
- Connect People to Nature
- Support Community Aspirations
- Convene, Plan and Build a Regional Trail System



The system plan is a natural evolution and a critical step in Metro’s 25-year journey as a parks provider. It is a major milestone, and it represents the beginning of a new phase.

Strategies and actions in the system plan set out an ambitious work program. Focusing on conservation science, securing long-term funding, developing and operating welcoming and inclusive parks, and incorporating equity across the Parks and Nature portfolio are key to the long-term success of the program.

Just as a diverse group of partners helped Metro get to this point, the body of work laid out in the system plan will require the continued partnership of local governments, residents and community organizations.

## A brighter, wilder future

From preserving farmland to brewing beer, Oregonians do a world-class job at the things we love – and protecting nature towers near the top of that list.

Over the last quarter-century, voters have supported investments to build a regional park system that spans 17,000 acres and touches every community in the greater Portland area. Metro is proud to serve as steward of the forests, savannas, wetlands and riverbanks that make this region unique.

Our landscape creates a stunning place to call home, and a lot of opportunities to explore. By protecting nature, we keep our air and water clean. We secure the future of native fish, wildlife and plants. We make our communities more resilient, and more fun. We attract businesses and tourists who seek out a beautiful, healthy, playful destination.

After 25 years of investment, Metro owes it to Oregonians to make the most of the land they’ve protected. Very few metropolitan areas have the opportunity before us: leveraging our natural setting to create a brighter, wilder future. That’s why we’re crafting a Parks and Nature System Plan to guide the next generation of decisions and investments.

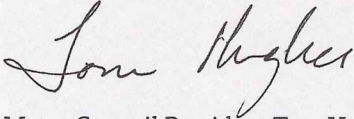
A plan can be a powerful tool. We’ve seen proof in the 1992 Greenspaces Master Plan, which charted a vision and galvanized support to bring it to life. Today, that plan has translated to a big portfolio of parks, trails, natural areas, nature programs and historic cemeteries. What we need is an overarching strategy to protect, care for and connect people with these special places.

While laying out Metro’s mission, role and priorities, the system plan also promises to make sure that nature benefits our whole community.

Sparkling water, soaring birds and family picnics belong to every Oregonian – including people of color and low-income residents, who have often been left behind by public investments. It is Metro’s responsibility, and our honor, to build an equitable Parks and Nature system.

We have all the right ingredients: A landscape worth protecting. People who love it. A track record of innovation and investment. And, now, a plan to guide our efforts over the next 25 years and beyond.

Let’s get started.



Metro Council President Tom Hughes

Metro Council President	Metro Councilors		Auditor
Tom Hughes	Shirley Craddick, District 1	Kathryn Harrington, District 4	Brian Evans
	Carlotta Collette, District 2	Sam Chase, District 5	
	Craig Dirksen, District 3	Bob Stacey, District 6	

Thanks to voters, Metro Parks and Nature protects clean water, healthy wildlife habitat and opportunities to connect with nature on 17,000 acres across the greater Portland region. Explore news, photos and events at [oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews](http://oregonmetro.gov/parksandnaturenews)